

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05  
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01  
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 OMB-01 ACDA-12 HA-05  
AID-05 SIL-01 LAB-04 EB-08 /115 W  
-----006994 131545Z /45

R 131245Z JAN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY RABAT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4182  
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS  
AMEMBASSY MADRID  
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT  
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 RABAT 0257

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINS PINT SHUM EFIN MO  
SUBJECT: MOROCCO'S FIRST PARLIAMENTARY SESSION ENDS

REF: (A) 77 RABAT 6576, (B) 77 RABAT 6731 (NOTAL)

1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY. MOROCCO'S FIRST PARLIAMENT UNDER THE 1972 CONSTITUTION OPENED ON OCT 14 AND ADJOURNED DEC 30. PARLIAMENT WILL MEET FOR ITS NEXT SESSION IN APRIL. THE COALITION OF INDEPENDENTS AND PRO-GOVERNMENT PARTIES HELD TOGETHER IN THE VOTING, ALTHOUGH THERE WAS A LACK OF COHESIVNESS AMONG THE DIVERSE INDEPENDENT DEPUTIES. THE LEFT PROVIDED THE ONLY LIVELINESS IN THE SESSION, STRONGLY AND ARTICULATELY CRITICIZING MOST GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS AND CASTING ITS MEAGER (15 OUT OF 264) VOTES AGAINST EVERYTHING BUT THE MILITARY BUDGET, THE ONLY ITEM TO PASS UNANIMOUSLY.

2. THERE ARE RUMORS THAT PRIMIN OSMAN WILL LEAVE THE GOVERNMENT BEFORE THE APRIL SESSION, AND THAT THE USFP MIGHT ENTER A NEW CABINET, AND POLITICAL MANEUVERING CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE  
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THROUGHOUT THE RECESS.

3. THE CHOOSING OF THE PARLIAMENT HAS WITNESSED STEPS AT LIBERALIZATION ON A NUMBER OF FRONTS, AND THUS RESULTED IN HUMAN RIGHTS GAINS. WHETHER THIS PROCESS HAS BEEN ENCOURAGED BY THE KING, OR BEEN FORCED ON HIM BY THE SERIOUS SAHARA SITUATION IS ARGUABLE. WHETHER IT WILL SURVIVE AND CONTINUE

IN A POST-SAHARA CRISIS SETTING IS A QUESTION ONLY TIME WILL  
TELL. END SUMMARY.

4. ACCOMPLISHMENTS: DUE TO TIME CONSTRAINTS, THE MAIN SUBSTANTIVE  
WORK ACCOMPLISHED IN THE OPENING OCTOBER-DECEMBER 1977  
PARLIAMENTARY SESSION WAS PASSAGE OF THE BUDGET. THE FIRST SIX  
WEEKS OF THE SESSION WERE CONSUMED BY EFFORTS TO ORGANIZE,, I. E.,  
ADOPTION OF INTERNAL RULES OF ORDER, ELECTION OF OFFICERS, AND  
CHOOSING OF COMMITTEES. PARLIAMENT ALSO HEARD THE PRIMIN  
OUTLINE THE GOVERNMENT'S OVERALL PROGRAM FOR THE COUNTRY.  
THURSDAY WERE RESERVED FOR INTERPELLATION OF THE GOVERNMENT AND  
SAW LIVELY EXCHANGES, PARTICULARLY PROMPTED BY THE LEFT.  
PARLIAMENT IN ADDITION SENT A MESSAGE ON THE SAHARA TO FOREIGN  
REPRESENTATIVES BODIES IN NOVEMBER AND SPOKESMEN FOR EVERY MAJOR  
FACTION CALLED FOR RELEASE OF ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS.

5. THE DEBATES ON THE BUDGET WITNESSED THE PARLIAMENTARY  
MACHINERY -- AND THE PARLIAMENT'S INTERNAL POLITICAL BLOCS --  
BEGIN TO FUNCTION IN EARNEST. PRESS COVERAGES WAS EXTENSIVE,  
AND THE VISITORS' GALLERIES FULL. THE 12 COMMITTEES REVIEWED  
THOSE PARTS OF THE BUDGET FOR WHICH THEY WERE RESPONSIBL, WITH  
CLOSED HEARINGS ON SUCH SUBJECTS AS DEFENSE AND INTERNAL  
ORGANIZATION. THE BUDGETS OF EACH MINISTRY WERE THEN VOTED ON  
INDIVIDUALLY IN OPEN PLENARY SESSION. DEPUTIES' DEMARCHES IN  
COMMITTEES RESULTED IN ADJUSTMENTS TO A FEW ITEMS IN THE BUDGET,  
NOTABLY AN INCREASE IN THE FUNDS ALLOCATED TO LOCALLY ELECTED  
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COUNCILS AND SOME MODERATION OF PROPOSED TAX INCREASES. DEBATES  
IN COMMITTEES WERE APPARENTLY LIVELY AND OCCASIONALLY  
NON-PARTISAN.

6. INNER DYNAMICS. PARTISAN POLITICS PERSISTED IN PLENARY  
SESSION, HOWEVER, AS VOTING DISCIPLINE AMONG THE PRO-GOVERNMENT  
INDEPENDENTS AND PARTIES (ISTIQLAL AND POPULAR MOVEMENT-MP)  
HELD THROUGHOUT. THERE WAS, HOWEVER, ABSENTEEISM OF UP TO 50  
PERCENT FOR THE VOTING ON THE BUDGET. (LEFTIST DEPUTIES  
MAINTAINED THAT MANY ABSENTEES HAD DISAGREED WITH PARTS OF THE  
DRAFT BUDGET IN COMMITTEE.) THE 15 DEPUTIES OF THE SOCIALIST  
UNION OF POPULAR FORCES (USFP), JOINED BY THE SINGLE COMMUNIST  
DEPUTY AND ON OCCASION BY SOME OF THE SIX DEPUTIES OF THE  
MOROCCAN LABOR UNION (UMT), VOTED AGAINST ALL PORTIONS OF THE  
BUDGET EXCEPT THE NATIONAL DEFENSE SEGMENT, WHICH PASSED  
UNANIMOUSLY. IN ADDITION, USFP REFUSED TO PARTICIPATE IN PLENARY  
DEBATES ON THE BUDGET IN PROTEST AGAINST THE PRESIDENT'S  
RULING THAT GAVE EACH BLOC (WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION) AN OPPORTUNITY  
TO SPEAK ONLY ONCE ON THE CRITICAL FIRST 26 ARTICLES OF THE  
BUDGET WHICH COVERED ALL GOVERNMENT REVENUES.

7. PARTY REACTION. SPOKESMEN FOR THE INDEPENDENTS, ISTIQLAL,

AND MP ALL EXPRESSED SATISFACTION OVER THE OUTCOME OF THE FIRST SESSION. THE INDEPENDENT LEADERSHIP IS REPORTEDLY CONCERNED, HOWEVER, OVER THE LACK OF COHESIVENESS IN THE AMORPHOUS GROUP (141 OUT OF 264 SEATS) AND A GATHERING IS PLANNED FOR AGADIR LATER THIS MONTH TO SHIFT KEY PERSONNEL AND DISCUSS TACTICS. THE GROUP IS EXPECTED TO STOP SHORT OF ANY FORMAL CONSTITUTION OF A PARTY. MEANWHILE, MP (44 DEPUTIES) CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE FOLLOWING THE GOVERNMENT LINE. ISTIQLAL (50 DEPUTIES) CLAIMS THAT ITS MINIMUM PROGRAMS WERE INCORPORATED INTO THIS YEAR'S GOVERNMENTAL PROGRAM AND THAT IT IS SATISFIED. ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN POLICY STRAINS SINCE ISTIQLAL'S INCLUSION IN THE GOVERNMENT IN OCTOBER (NOTABLY OVER GOM SUPPORT FOR THE SADAT INITIATIVE), ALL INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE PARTY WILL GIVE ITS PARTICIPATION MORE TIME TO TAKE EFFECT AND WILL THUS CONTINUE  
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TO SUPPORT GOVERNMENT POLICIES.

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INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

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8. THE SMALL BUT HIGHLY VISIBLE LEFT, LED BY USFP, HAS COMPLAINED OF THE "DICTATORSHIP OF THE MAJORITY" IN PARLIAMENT AND THE CAPITALIST NATURE OF THE GOVERNMENT AND ITS BUDGET, AND PROFESSES TO BE MORE CONFIRMED IN ITS OPPOSITION THAN EVER. ITS

TIGHTLY-KNIT, HIGHLY-QUALIFIED AND ARTICULATE DEPUTIES  
PROVIDED THE ONLY SPARKS IN PLENARY SESSIONS AND IT CAN BE EXPECTED T  
O  
CONTINUE TO PLAY A SERIOUS, CONSTRUCTIVE OPPOSITION ROLE.

9. OUTLOOK. RUMORS ARE CURRENTLY RIFE THAT PRIMIN OSMAN WILL  
STEP DOWN BEFORE THE NEXT SCHEDULED PARLIAMENTARY SESSION IN  
APRIL TO PERMIT A NEW GOVERNMENT TO BE FORMED, POSSIBLY  
INCLUDING THE USFP. ACCORDING TO THIS SPECULATION, THE RESULTS  
OF THE FRENCH ELECTIONS AND EXPECTED CONTINUING SAHARA TENSIONS  
WILL SET THE STAGE FOR THE LEFT TO JOIN GOVERNMENT RANKS, AS IT  
HAS PROMISED TO DO IF NATIONAL SECURITY DICTATED. OSMAN, WHO  
HAS BEEN PRIMIN SINCE NOV 1972 AND IS ALSO DEPUTY FROM OUJDA,  
WOULD CONCENTRATE ON LEADING THE INDEPENDENTS, AND THE NEW  
PRIMIN WOULD BE EITHER ROYAL COUNSELOR REDA GUEDIRA OR ISTIQLAL  
LEADER BOUCETTA. MEANWHILE, USFP MAINTAINS THERE IS NO  
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SUBSTANTIVE BASIS FOR ENTERING THE CABINET. IN ANY CASE,  
OBSERVERS OF THE MOROCCAN SCENE KNOW BETTER THAN TO COUNT ON  
ADVANCE PUBLICITY, ALTHOUGH OSMAN, ON RENEWING HIS MANDATE  
LAST OCTOBER, WAS WIDELY EXPECTED TO REMAIN ONLY DURING A  
TRANSITIONAL STAGE.

10. NEXT BUSINESS: THE NEXT ORDER OF BUSINESS IN THE APRIL  
SESSION IS EXPECTED TO BE THE NEW FIVE YEAR PLAN. (RUMORS ARE  
THAT IT WILL COVER THE PERIOD 1979-1983, THUS LEAVING 1978 FOR  
FULFILMENT OF GOALS SET IN THE 1973-1977 PLAN.) THE  
MOROCCAN-MAURITANIAN MUTUAL DEFENSE ACCORD MAY ALSO BE  
SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

11. COMMENT: ON THE BASIS OF THE FIRST SESSION, PARLIAMENTARY  
INPUT INTO THE GOVERNING PROCESS HAS SO FAR BEEN MINIMAL. THIS  
DOES NOT OF COURSE RULE OUT EVENTUAL EVOLUTION INTO A MORE  
IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTOR TO NATIONAL POLICY. THE EXERCISE OF  
CHOOSING A PARLIAMENT HAS IN ITSELF HELPED THE SOCIETY TO  
LIBERALIZE ON A NUMBER OF FRONTS, INCLUDING LIFTING OF  
CENSORSHIP, PARTICIPATION OF A SIGNIFICANT PART OF THE  
POLITICAL OPPOSITION IN THE GOVERNMENT, AND PROVIDING A SOUNDING  
BOARD FOR THE SOCIETY'S ILLS. ALL ARE HUMAN RIGHTS GAINS. IT  
CAN BE ARGUED THAT THE PALACE HAS BEEN OBLIGED TO BRING TOGETHER  
THE COUNTRY'S DIVERSE ELEMENTS TO FACE (AND SHARE THE BLAME FOR)  
THE SERIOUS EXTERNAL AND GROWING FINANCIAL PROBLEMS AT HAND.  
OTHERS WILL MAINTAIN THAT THE KING'S INCREASED CONFIDENCE,  
BROUGHT ON BY WIDESPREAD SUPPORT FOR HIS SAHARA POLICY, HAS  
PERMITTED HIM TO MOVE AHEAD TO LIBERALIZE MOROCCO'S GOVERNING  
PROCESS. WHAT IS CERTAIN IS THAT HE HAS COOPTED THE MAJOR, IF  
MORE MODERATE, ELEMENTS OF THE OPPOSITION BY INDUCING THEM TO  
PARTICIPATE IN THE GOVERNMENT. ONLY TIME WILL TELL WHETHER  
THESE HOPEFUL FIRST STEPS WILL SURVIVE A POST-SHARA SETTING

AND DEVELOP INTO FULLY VIABLE INSTITUTIONS PARTICIPATING IN  
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THE DAILY LIFE OF THE COUNTRY.  
ANDERSON

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## Message Attributes

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